

THE WATER COMPANIES.

At the close of an article in the new number of the *Westminster Review*, condemnatory of the Board of Health's scheme for supplying London with water, the writer says:—

"Having thus freely expressed ourselves on this plan, we would most carefully guard ourselves from being misunderstood, as advocating the cause of the present companies, and their modes and sources of supply. There is, undoubtedly, much to condemn; but we are far from thinking that the mutual check of these great bodies, who are extremely jealous of each other, may not be valuable to the consumers. The consumption of water is not expensable, nor is it a manufactured article, like gas: any attempt at exaltation and centralisation will have its attendant evils, and certainly the most recent and successful attempts at amalgamation, that of the Southwark and Vauxhall Companies, was not by any means advantageous to the public, although so highly paraded by the Clay school of economists. Imagine that within several years two companies should have united, to do no better than erect works for pumping from the Thames below Battersea-bridge, with a suction-pipe, opposite the Ranelagh and King's Scholars' Pond Sewer, and only half a mile above the great gas and bone-grinding establishments at Vauxhall—*ecce signum*—in the tall clean stand-pipes and chimneys near the Nine Elms station. We should earnestly advise the present water companies to beware of paying high dividends, and rather to reserve their surplus profits to meet the spirit of the times, and the unavoidable march of events and of improvement. The stewardship is an important one, and we believe that there is every reasonable chance of such an extension of the metropolis as to make either new efforts by the present companies, or new companies for the outlying districts, a certain and safe investment of capital, with the additional advantage of doing common justice to the water-rate payers, who are entitled to be heard in their cry for reform, although one may be not disposed to accede to them a vote in the management of concerns which require careful attention, and that kind of energy and control which is only to be found successfully applied by those with whom it is a pocket question."

In conclusion he observes:—

"Among the numerous schemes which have been prepared for the next session of Parliament, for better supplying water to the whole or part of the metropolis, it is singular that the Board of Health project, although open to the public, has not found any one to pay the expense of the necessary plans, so as to give it a position before the Legislature. We are to have pure spring water from Watford, on the north; on the south, the Wandle is to be relieved of sewerage, and pumped up for supplying the district which it traverses; in the west, the Thames is to be delivered from Henley; and, in the east, immense reservoirs are to be formed in the valleys of the Lee, while the old New River is to be straightened, enlarged, and shortened in its windings, by twelve miles out of forty, so as to carry the great additional volume of water, which would be available for London, at the elevation of Islington. This plan is designed to give, by means of the reservoirs, that amount of soft water stored at flood time, which, mixed with the pure chalk-borne streams of the district, would offer a moderately soft water to the consumer, in lieu of the present undoubtedly hard supply. The principle of this project was in fact to a great extent sanctioned by the Legislature during last session. We will leave for the present the discussion of these several plans, feeling assured that Parliament will not allow another session to pass without deciding fairly on the merits of each and all of the rival schemes."

The *Times* has said lately on the same subject,—"The propositions which lie at the bottom of the question are not difficult of demonstration. London is now supplied imperfectly and irregularly with bad water at a great outlay: it ought to be supplied cheaply and well. Water cannot be too pure from all admixture, animal, vegetable, or mineral—organic or inorganic. For general uses the absence of any particular bias is most manifestly inculcated. The effects of a pure and ample supply upon health and life are not within calculation; the economy resulting

from the possession of a perfect solvent and a good detergent are equally beyond calculation. We might go further and plead for classes whose comfort and self-respect hang upon this simple element, and to whom tea and soap are luxuries which they can ill afford to waste. We might urge the growing danger of a calcareous diathesis, and the unpleasant roughness imparted to our cuticle. We might allude to the extended sale of bleaching liquid, and the extended depreciation of our undergarments. We might put in a plea for Mr. Cruikshank and his brother tee-totalers, now exposed to a double temptation, inasmuch as they must at once reject what is nice and condemn themselves to that which is nasty; but we would not add to the credibility of a fact which stands confessed—the first and greatest city in the universe ought not longer to sustain the reproach of neglecting the first and greatest addition which she could make to the solidity of her institutions, the splendour of her streets, and the list of her charities."

JOHN KAY, THE INVENTOR OF THE SPINNING-JENNY.

It has been the custom of John Bull, from time immemorial, to reward the inventive faculties, genius, or heroism, of Albion's sons not (more's the pity) with substantial proofs of his approbation during their lifetime, but with "statues" to their memory after death! Alas! how many of our greatest men (Nature's noblemen) have passed from this work-a-day world to that

"Bourne from whence no traveller returns"

in poverty and obscurity—unpitied and uncared for. The "hero of a hundred fights," it is true, has lived to see statues around him, plentiful as blackberries; but this is the exception to the rule: for how many years did old Time roll on before justice was done to our immortal Shakespeare? In our own times, how long before the naval hero who never knew what fear was, was handed down to posterity in Trafalgar-square? and how long it will be before his dying request will be complied with by his grateful country, Heaven only knows!

There is one man whose inventive genius enabled a harber to become a prince, in point of wealth—whose genius has enabled others to amass princely fortunes—whose genius enabled the poorest of the poor to wear clothing and huy it for next to nothing: so cheaply, indeed, can what was once a luxury be now made, that in Manchester and other districts, it is well known that the article (calico) is used by shopkeepers as cheaper and better than paper-bags—and yet this man has found not one soul to "propose" even a monument to his memory. Need I say that I allude to JOHN KAY, the inventor of the spinning-jenny; and yet this man was left by Arkwright (the barber, who made his fortune by his means) to die in poverty and distress. Surely, surely it is not yet too late to do justice to such a man! Surely the present inheritors of old Arkwright's princely fortune, built, colossal as it was, upon the energies of this poor man, cannot refuse to "come down handsomely" towards a statue to poor John Kay's memory, even if they do not think it worth while to defray the cost, as they ought, out of their own private purse.

I feel so satisfied that something *should* and *could* be done, that I venture to suggest the subject to you. There is not among the mechanics a holiday visitor to Gravesend who brings away his shrimps in a cotton bag, who would not, I am convinced, put down his trifle, should those who have benefited by "poor John Kay's invention" fail to do what is right.

R. KNEVETT.

MR. BEAUFOY'S SCHOOL, LAMBETH.—We have before now mentioned the large school-house erected in Lambeth, at the cost of Mr. Beaufoy, who seems never to tire of doing good works, and so exemplifying what his name imports. Beau-foy and a *fine faith* are now synonymous in English as well as French. A correspondent tells us that the following genial and suggestive quotation has been placed upon the school:—"They that do teach young babes, do it with gentle means and easy tasks."

IPSWICH GRAMMAR-SCHOOL COMPETITION.

THE letter which appeared in your paper of last week, in reference to the competition for the Ipswich Grammar School, is in part unfair, in part untrue.

It is unfair to several gentlemen of the highest character to leave it to be supposed, that the number of designs under consideration was reduced to fourteen with no more deliberation than could be bestowed upon them in the space of their first meeting. The designs had been most carefully studied by them as individuals, and they, therefore, met in committee to give formal sanction to conclusions already formed. There was no such "quick work" as your correspondent supposes.

The same careful and repeated examination in the interval enabled them, at their second meeting, to reduce the reserved plans to four, which were not exclusively by Ipswich architects. A man's style of drawing is as easily recognised as his handwriting, and it is not, therefore, surprising that the plans of local architects should be known. But that the committee were perfectly uncorrupt may be inferred from the fact, that one local design was rejected because it avowedly exceeded in cost the sum stated in their advertisement, although it was accompanied by an offer of pecuniary assistance to carry it out.

Again, the premium was not absolutely assigned to Mr. Woolnough, but on the condition that his estimate was proved correct. When this was found otherwise, the committee intended to fall back upon the other designs. If these, too, failed on this point, the discredit must have lain with the architects. But the attack of your correspondent has caused the withdrawal of almost all the plans.

This may force them to apply to some architect for a new or an amended design. But I am authorised to say that it is untrue that they have employed any one to do so as yet, and to deny that to their knowledge any one has been making a piratical use of the designs committed to their care.

I enclose my card, and am
NOT ONE OF THE COMMITTEE.

I am anxious to bear testimony to the truth of the statement of your contributors as to the unfair and unhandsome conduct of the Committee for selection in this matter. Being near the town, and somewhat interested in the competition, on application I was admitted to see the designs submitted for the proposed new school, many of which were good, and must have cost much time and money in their completion; and it was with some degree of pain I observed the careless indifference which was shown in the preservation of the designs so liberally entrusted for their selection.

After looking round the room with a young gentleman who was sent to show me, I enquired if he could tell me which was the design selected: when pointed out I involuntarily started, and asked if he knew the author, when it was reluctantly admitted to be a resident in the town, at the same time pointing out two other designs near, as the production of resident architects. This was before the selection was determined, and when the motto only should have been known. On examining the plans of the one supposed to be selected, I was still more perplexed to divine the reasons or grounds on which its merits rested, as it appeared to me to be ill-arranged and ill-constructed, and certainly had fewer claims in point of taste and purity of design than any I saw; indeed, I should be sorry to see the building erected. If the design pointed out to me, as you state, the production of a resident architect, and the one decided on by the committee as the best (I do not recollect the motto, "cum spes labore," would also allow his to be published, the public will be able to form some opinion as to their relative merits.

I should think these about equivalent as to cost; there were others more elaborate.

If the committee found themselves in a difficulty in making their selection, or, as it appears, they were not unanimous in opinion, they might easily have called in some professional gentleman, who would have assisted them and relieved them in part of their responsibility. No one will deny but that the com-